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For Notices of Births, Marriages, Deaths, &c., See Page 4.

SUMMARY.

A powerful fleet of Japanese battleships and cruisers, with 18 colliers, is proceeding south from Japan. It is evident that the fleet's object is to meet the Baltic fleet.

The Japanese will claim from neutral the gun facilities which have been extended to the Baltic fleet.

The Japanese captured 13 guns and considerable quantities of ammunition and stores at the north of East Ki-kwan-shan.

The Japanese are now able to employ a plunging fire into the east harbour of Port Arthur.

They hold five out of seven of the forts guarding the main lines of defence.

The latest capture also facilitates the impending general assault on the western half of the eastern fort ridge.

It is reported that General Nogai has asked for 80,000 reinforcements to capture the forts by the Chinese New Year.

The British steamer Lady Mitchell, manned by New Zealanders, ran the blockade during a gale.

General Kurapatkin reports that the Japanese were dislodged from trenches near the railway bridge over the sea.

The Car was present at a meeting of the Council of the Empire to consider the demand for reforms.

The Procurator of the Holy Synod stated that the Car must be guided in reforms by religious as well as by political reasons.

The Procurator declared that if the Car demanded autonomy and gave the people representative government the Church would lose its power.

Mr. White said that if it was known the Car was legally and religiously unable to grant reforms some of the people would resort to force.

Warsaw has been placarded with a revolutionary proclamation inciting the people to force.

The appointment of General Flinn as Inspector-General of the Forces and of Captain Gifford as Director of the Naval Forces has been approved.

The postal conference has forwarded a reply to the Minister. It is not intended at present to enter into any English mail contract.

The annual report of the Commercial Travellers' Association stated that despite the commercial depression the association has prospered.

It is estimated that 200,000 lambs have been exported this season from South Australia to London and other overseas ports.

Officers of the Works Department deny that they have preferred employment to 12 men whose names had a misdeed signed by Mr. R. W. O'Sullivan.

Five large interstate shipping organizations have been formed to prevent overhauling and to better regulate the trade.

The Works Department is taking action with a view of averting the possibility of a strike of the North Sydney water supply.

Mr. Justice Cohen is expected to return to Sydney on Wednesday to hear on application for an injunction in the Police-Main matter.

Mr. Justice G. B. Simpson has been granted a month's leave of absence, commencing from January 1.

During the absence of his Honor the Supreme Court business will be conducted by Mr. Justice G. B. Simpson.

The Government departments will be closed on Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday, and also on Wednesday week next.

At a meeting of the State Cabinet yesterday—the last of the year—the Premier expressed thanks to his colleagues for their energetic assistance.

Mr. Wilson of the Public Service Board has been appointed to inquire into statements made in connection with the bankruptcy of Captain Hill.

Meas. Coghlan, Curry, and J. Davis have been appointed as the local government commissioners.

An Italian Salomons has submitted the opinion that Alderman Taylor, Lord Mayor, has not been disqualified from holding office.

Council's opinion has been obtained on account of Alderman Taylor's firm having supplied to municipal contractors.

In the Bedford Police Court yesterday a charge of being concerned in the forging of a bank note.

Charles Parker, aged 20, who is one of the accused, made a long statement on the way in which he had manufactured the notes.

Captain Dakin stated before the Navigation Committee yesterday that the ship was not a submarine because if they did they would be "bumped down."

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3949, 3951, 3953, 3955, 3957, 3959, 3961, 3963, 3965, 3967, 3969, 3971, 3973, 3975, 3977, 3979, 3981, 3983, 3985, 3987

THE WAR.

JAPANESE FLEET.

TO MEET ROZHDZESTVENSKY.

THE BESIEGED FORTRESS.

DEFENDING GENERAL ASSAULT.

BATTERING GOLDEN HILL.

AMMUNITION FOR THE GARRISON.

LONDON, Dec. 22.

A powerful fleet of Japanese battleships and armed cruisers with fifteen colliers proceeding south from Japan, evidently to meet the Baltic Fleet. The Japanese fleet will claim from neutral the same facilities which have been extended to the Baltic Fleet.

Frenchmen report that Vice-Admiral Rozhdzestvensky, commanding the principal squadron of the Baltic Fleet, remaining 12 miles off Dakar, Senegambia, coaling from the sea.

SEIGE OF PORT ARTHUR.

HEROES OF THE STORMING.

SIXTY THOUSAND REINFORCEMENTS.

General Nogi, commanding the besiegers of Port Arthur, has reported that 13 guns of the north fort of East Ki-kan-shan, with considerable quantities of ammunition and stores.

In the storming of the north fort and its capture the Japanese lost 400 men. They are now able to employ a plunging fire against the east harbour.

After the first assault by the Japanese on the north fort of East Ki-kan-shan had been repulsed the defenders were reinforced by 300 men, only 20 of whom escaped, the exploding of the mines filling the covered way.

The Japanese "white" and "red" heroes, following that their bodies might be mutilated by the explosions of green shells, wrote their names upon their caps, leggings, and clothing, for purposes of identification in the event of their death.

The Japanese now hold five or seven of the forts guarding the main lines of defence. The capture of the north fort of East Ki-kan-shan facilitates the impending general assault on the western half of the eastern fort ridge.

The besiegers are employing thousands of coolies to build strong forts encircling Port Arthur defences. A great work has been effected on Hoo-shan Hill, making it by means of trenches and thousands of sandbags the nature of a Golden Hill at the harbour's entrance. On the summit it is intended to mount 111 guns.

It is reported that General Nogi has asked for 80,000 reinforcements in order to capture the fortress by the Chinese New Year (about the end of January). Some reinforcements have already arrived from the north.

A Russian shell struck the Japanese depot of grenades and shells on 23rd March Hill, and exploded the ammunition. Many Japanese were injured.

SUCCESSFUL BLOCKADE RUNNER.

The British steamer Lady Mitchell, 1850 tons, ran the blockade of Port Arthur, and a snowstorm was raging. The Lady Mitchell, which is manned by a crew of Norwegian, conveyed ammunition and dynamite to the fortress.

ON THE SEA-NO LIFE.

Japanese discharged from the trenches.

General Kuropatkin, commanding the Russian forces in Manchuria, reports that a detachment of Chasseurs on the night of the 18th instant dislodged the Japanese from trenches near the railway bridge over the Russian River. The Japanese destroyed the approaches to the bridge with proximity.

RUSSIAN RESERVES.

When the present Russian scheme of mobilization has been completed there will be 200,000 of the reserves under the colours.

GERMAN MILITARY OPINION.

According to General Meckel, a former officer of the Japanese military authorities, the German General Staff is convinced of the hopelessness of the Russians emerging from the war victorious.

The officer who conveys the opinion of the German General Staff is Major-General Meckel, formerly military instructor in Berlin. He was in Japan in 1903, and was General Staff, saying that the Yalu victory was won "by officers whom you instructed."

CABLE TO THE JAPANESE CONSUL.

Mr. K. Iwaki, the Acting Consul-General in Japan, yesterday received the following telegram from Baron Komura, the Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs:

"Our Port Arthur army reports that the body taken at the north fort of Tunkwan-shan included four quick-firing (two inch), four machine guns (all usable), five field guns (under examination), and rifles, shells, ammunition, grenades, etc."

COMMENTS ON THE SITUATION.

The Port Arthur garrison and the Russian people cannot be abandoned hope that the Baltic fleet will meet the Japanese fleet early next year. But after assuming certain measure of success—an assumption which is shadowed by doubt—the Baltic ships could not find a haven in Port Arthur, while the Japanese siege guns are directing a fire upon the anchorages. Nor is it to be expected that naval fire from Russian guns would compel the Japanese fleet to retire from those positions. If Rozhdzestvensky proved capable of running the gauntlet of the Japanese fleet he would make for Vladivostok, being content meanwhile that he had evaded the waiting fleet of the Baltic and junk to follow the example set by the King Arthur and the Lady Mitchell, and replenish the food and ammunition supplies of Hoo-shan. The Russian Admiral would, if possible, daily order his ships to land the men he could spare; in due course others would be sent southward from Vladivostok. There remains some doubt whether the Baltic could enter Vladivostok, even with the aid of the ice-breaker, if Rozhdzestvensky has no law, and if the fleet were able to go so far the chances are that an entrance would be effected. Rozhdzestvensky would then re-attack the ships. They would actually be in a full position. The Baltic battle takes place.

TASMANIA.

The council of the University of Tasmania has decided to exclude geography, Italian, and elementary politics from subjects to count for honours.

The Agent-General has forwarded to the Premier of the island an expert Mr. F. G. Smith, who has been in the island for some time. The agent-general has been in the island for some time. The agent-general has been in the island for some time.

NEW ZEALAND.

Wellington, Thursday. The new patent medicine regulations will not come into force till October 1 next year.

At Christchurch a deputation waited on Mr. Seddon with respect to facilitating a road to the Falkland Islands, and establishing a forced labour system for the island.

Mr. Seddon said he would send a memorandum on the subject to the Secretary of State with a view to the Government's policy of 2500 for the best means of extermination of noxious weeds.

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS. Children should be allowed a free hand with their toys. The children should be allowed a free hand with their toys. The children should be allowed a free hand with their toys.

SPECIAL CABLES.

(FROM THE "HERALD'S" LONDON CORRESPONDENTS.)

THE NORTH SEA OUTRAGE.

STORY OF RUSSIAN BRIBES.

A REPENTANT FISHERMAN.

LONDON, Dec. 22.

In connection with the bringing of fishes to market, a statement favourable to the Russian case, it is reported that the boatman of one of the vessels of the Gamcock trawling fleet, which was fired on by the Russians in the North Sea, admits that after drinking he accepted money from Russian agents, and made a statement before the Russian Consul that he had seen torpedo boats with the trawling fleet about the time of the outrage.

Two Russian agents who were at Hull have been traced to London. They justified their action of bribing fishermen to give false statements. The Russian Consul, while disclaiming all knowledge of the subornation, acknowledged that he received the statements obtained by the agents.

FOG IN LONDON.

TRAFFIC DISORGANISED.

LONDON, Dec. 22.

A very dense fog prevailed in London last night. All vehicles were stopped, and the railway service was disorganised. Pedestrians got hopelessly lost, and there were numerous accidents.

Owing to the fog Queen Alexandra was unable to travel to Sandringham.

According to a lecture delivered before the Royal Society of Meteorology, a gratifying decrease in the number of London fogs has been noted since the first condition of the atmosphere, and that the production of fog and the character of the fog, since 1881, there has been an equal marked decrease. The minimum of 1903 fogs depended mainly on an anticyclonic condition of the atmosphere, and that the first condition of the atmosphere, and that the production of fog and the character of the fog, since 1881, there has been an equal marked decrease.

Another report, however, states that the fog has not decreased in frequency, but that the character of the fog has changed, and that the production of fog and the character of the fog, since 1881, there has been an equal marked decrease.

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RUSSIA.

THE CAZAR IN COUNCIL.

CONSIDERATION OF REFORMS.

REACTIONARIES VICTORIOUS.

AUTOCRACY ALONE POSSIBLE.

LONDON, Dec. 22.

The Czar was present at a meeting of the Council of his Empire some days ago to consider the demand for reforms made by the private conference of municipalities.

M. Pobedonostzeff, the Procurator of the Holy Synod, warned his Imperial Majesty that as Czar he was not only Emperor of Russia but head of the Church in Russia, and must be guided in his reforms by religious and political reasons. If he abandoned his autocracy and gave the people representative government the Church would lose its power.

M. Witte, the President of the Council of Ministers, declared that if it was known that the Czar was legally and religiously unable to grant fundamental reforms a portion of the people would rise to force.

M. Muraviev, the Minister for Justice, contended that the Czar was not legally entitled to upset the political regime.

Prince Sviatopolk-Mirski, the Minister for the Interior, insisted that the present situation could not be prolonged without danger. Concessions to the people involved fewer difficulties than the maintenance of the status quo.

A very dense fog prevailed in London last night. All vehicles were stopped, and the railway service was disorganised. Pedestrians got hopelessly lost, and there were numerous accidents.

Owing to the fog Queen Alexandra was unable to travel to Sandringham.

According to a lecture delivered before the Royal Society of Meteorology, a gratifying decrease in the number of London fogs has been noted since the first condition of the atmosphere, and that the production of fog and the character of the fog, since 1881, there has been an equal marked decrease.

Another report, however, states that the fog has not decreased in frequency, but that the character of the fog has changed, and that the production of fog and the character of the fog, since 1881, there has been an equal marked decrease.

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BRITISH POLITICS.

FISCAL BLUE BOOK.

PURCHASING POWERS COMPARED.

LONDON, Dec. 22.

The second blue book on the fiscal question has been issued. It contains 600 pages dealing with the social aspects of trade and industry, and comparative data in regard to pauperism and the unemployed. Memoranda of the consumption of food and the cost of living to workmen's families show that 100 shillings now will purchase as much as 120 shillings would in 1880.

PROPRIETIES OF DEBATE.

The "Pall Mall Gazette" commenting on the speech delivered by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman at Limehouse, says that if the Radicals sincerely believe that the colonies are not with Mr. Chamberlain, the Radical opposition to the Colonial Conference is inexplicable. "Though Sir Henry, it adds, avoided repeating 'imperial bonds,' such phrases as 'imperially mongers,' 'tariff touts,' and 'wholly acts' were vulgar and are censurable.

INTERSTATE SHIPPING.

A COMBINATION OF COMPANIES.

